CICERO
ON
OLD AGE.

E.7.20
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CICERO

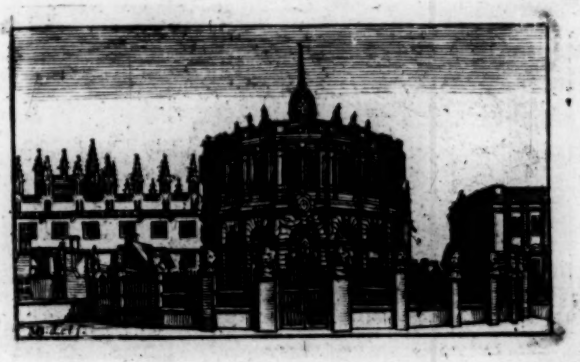
Rich: . . ON Miller

OLD AGE,

A

DIALOGUE.

Non possum legere Librum Ciceronis *de Senectute, quin aliquoties exosculer Codicem, ac venerer sanctum illud pectus, afflatum coelesti Numine.* Erasmus.



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J. BARON,

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Jun. 5. 1716.

Given by Mr. Sam: Hemming Clerk

To the Honourable

Sir *STEPHEN FOX.*

SIR,

THE following Treatiſe is ſo extreamly applicable to your Perſon, that, if my *Tranſlation* were in any reſpect equal to the *Original*, I ſhould need no other Apology for preſenting you with it.

The principal Perſon of the Dialogue is the *Elder Cato*, a Man of conſummate Wiſdom, and unblemiſh'd Virtue; a Man well qualified to recommend *Old Age*, and to diſplay in their fulleſt Luſtre the

the Privileges of his Years. And though the Account he gives of himſelf may ſeem very extraordinary, and even Hyperbolical, if compared with the Conduct of moſt Old Men; yet ſuch is that peculiar Eaſe and Addreſs, with which You bear your Age, that I cannot but think the Deſcription equalled by a living Original. Nay, had *Cicero* lived in Your Time, by an Obſervation of Your excellent Qualities, he might have changed his Character, and improved his Subject.

But I muſt confeſs, SIR, however applicable or agreeable, what *Cicero* ſays upon this Subject may be to you; the firm Belief, which he profeſſes of *a future State of Happineſs*, was (after the grateful Reſpects which firſt inclined me to undertake it) one of the chief In-

Inducements of my preſenting You with it. For to hear a *Heathen*, arguing ſo ſtrongly for the *Soul's Immortality*, by the pure Light of *Reaſon*, without the Aſſiſtance of *Revelation*, cannot but be acceptable to one, who has ſo zealouſly endeavoured to live up to the Rules of both.

But, however deſirous he is, to prove there is a Seaſon, when *Death* it ſelf becomes deſireable; ſince it has pleaſed God to confer upon Your Age ſuch Bleſſings, as are hardly to be paralleled; that You may find the Enjoyment of them as laſting, as they are extraordinary, are the fervent Prayers of,

SIR,

Your Moſt Obliged

Humble Servant

SAMUEL HEMMING.

 Rich: Miller

OF OLD AGE.

A DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Scipio, *Lælius*, and *Cato*.

Scip. LÆLIUS and I have often admired your excellent and perfect wiſdom, *O Marcus Cato*, in the conduct of your whole Life, and more particularly in bearing *Old Age*, which is ſuch an intolerable burthen to others, with ſo much eaſe and tranquillity.

Cato. What you ſpeak of hath no right to that admiration, which you think it deſerves: for to thoſe *who have nothing within themſelves* capable of making Life happy, and ſatisfactory, no wonder if every Stage of it ſhould prove irkſome, and vexatious: but, to thoſe who derive all their ſatisfaction from an *eaſy mind*, nothing can ſeem greivous and tormenting, that proceeds from the *irreverſible Laws of Nature*; which certainly is the caſe of *Old Age*, whereunto though 'tis the earneſt deſire of all men to arrive, yet ſuch is their unaccountable folly, and perverſeneſs, that they are never more uneaſy than when they have arrived at it; always complaining that it *ſtole*

upon *them unawares*. But pray whoſe fault is it, that they were ſo ſurprized by a wrong computation? Why may they not with equal reaſon exclaim, that their *Youth* came too quick upon their *Childhood*, as that *Old Age* ſtole upon their *Youth*? Or what reaſon have they to expect *Old Age* to be leſs burthenſome at eight hundred, than at eighty? For the time they have paſſed, of what length ſoever it be, will adminiſter no comfort to *Old Age*, if *fooliſhly ſquandered away*. Wherefore if you think me endued with any ſhare of *wiſdom*, (and oh, that what I had were worthy your admiration, and my character!) it *conſiſts in following Nature, as the beſt, and ſureſt guide in all things*; by which means having performed the ſeveral parts of Life agreeably, it is not probable, that, like an unskilful Poet, I ſhould be careleſs in ſetting off, and adorning the laſt Act of it to the beſt advantage. But ſince the laſt ſtage of Life will unavoidably come on, in which like ripened fruits we muſt decay, and wither; yet a Wiſe man will undergo it chearfully, ſince to reſiſt nature is little better, than with the Giants to wage war with Heaven it ſelf.

Lælius. Since then, *O Cato*, we are in hopes of attaining to your Age, you cannot poſſibly oblige us more, than by furniſhing us with ſuch arguments, as will be ſufficient to ſupport us under that *burthen*, with which it is uſually attended.

Cato. With all my heart, *Lælius*, for I muſt confeſs I have been often tired with the complaints, and lamentations of my Equals upon that ſubject; and have heard even men of the firſt

rank

rank bewailing themſelves, that they were now deprived of the enjoyment of thoſe pleaſures, without which Life had no manner of reliſh: and not only ſo, but that they met with neglect, and contempt from thoſe, who formerly courted them with the greateſt reſpect. But theſe men do not ſeem to lay the fault in the right place: for if Old Age might be juſtly charged with this misfortune, we ſhould be all equally involved in it: but I have met with frequent inſtances of thoſe, who have lived to a great Age, and found that the freedom they had got from the eagerneſs of their deſires was attended with no anxiety, and that they were ſtill regarded by their friends. But indeed the ground of all theſe murmurs, and repinings is founded in their *Morals, not in their years.* For thoſe, who have led their lives with moderation, and diſcretion, without peeviſhneſs, and ill nature, never complain, that Old Age is inſupportable. Nor is it to be much wondered at, that a reſtleſs croſsneſs ſhould be tormenting, and vexatious to every ſeaſon of Life.

Lælius. Though we ſhould grant what you have ſaid, yet may it be objected, that the eaſe, and ſatisfaction, you now enjoy, may be imputed to the happy circumſtances, you are in, which, you muſt allow, are not attainable by every one.

Cato. Something indeed may be allowed for that, but yet that my eaſe, and ſatisfaction are wholly owing to it, muſt not be granted. For what *Themiſtocles* is reported to have ſaid to a certain *Seriphian*, may in ſome meaſure be apply'd to Old Age, who, being told by way of calumny, that all the honour he had acquired, was derived to him from his Country, not himſelf; returned for an-

ſwer, that he muſt confeſs indeed, that he had been no more honourable, had he been born at *Seriphus*, than the other would have been illuſtrious by being born at *Athens*. For though a wiſe man cannot be very happy in his Old Age, if oppreſſed by extreme poverty; it is not in the power of Riches to make a fool happy at the ſame years.

The beſt arms then, that can be provided for the defence and ſecurity of Old Age, are Learning and a conſtant perſeverance in a virtuous courſe; which, if cultivated, and improved to the beſt advantage, in every condition of life, will be of ſingular uſe to us in our latter days: not only becauſe they will not fail us in our lateſt minutes (which of it ſelf is no ſmall comfort) but becauſe the conſciouſneſs of a well ſpent life, and the reflection upon having done many great and glorious actions, is the ſweeteſt of all enjoyments.

As a proof of what I have advanced, I ſhall firſt inſtance in the great *Quintus Maximus*; for whom (though he ſo far exceeded me in Years) I had as much affection and eſteem, as if he had been my equal. The many excellent atchievements of that great man, I am well acquainted with: but of all the many extraordinary qualifications, with which he was endu'd, no one can be more commendable, than the heroick conſtancy, with which he bore the loſs of his worthy ſon, a man, whoſe merits advanced him to the greateſt truſt and honour in the ſtate. Read what he wrote on that occaſion, and you will deſpiſe the beſt Philoſophers. Nor was he a great man only abroad, and in the eyes of the publick, but even at home, and in domeſtick affairs a greater.

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His diſcourſe! His precepts! His knowledge of antiquity! His skill in augury! His learning! His inexhauſted memory of all foreign as well as civil wars! Such was his converſation, and ſo eagerly deſirous of it was I, that by the ſpirit of divination, I did then as it were foretell, what has ſince come to paſs, that after him would remain no other, equally capable of giving us ſuch inſtruction. I have been the more particular in this, to ſhew you how unjuſt a reproach it is, to affirm that old age is miſerable of it ſelf.

But however it be objected, that it is not in the power of all men to have performed ſuch glorious actions, as contribute to their future happineſs: yet may there be produc'd ſufficient numbers of thoſe, who in a *private ſtation, even oppreſs'd with poverty*, have ſuſtain'd the infirmities of old age, with ſuch temper and moderation, as never to repine and murmur at it. Thus good old *Ennius*, without charging his age with faults and infirmities (as ſome inconſiderate perſons are apt to do) compared his condition to a well bred racer, who had been victorious for many years, and at laſt retreated to ſome quiet paſture, pleas'd with his former conqueſts, without any inclination to farther efforts: and the worthy perſon, I have mention'd, was ſo far reconcil'd to poverty, and that feebleneſs which accompanied it, that he ſeem'd to be delighted with them.

In ſeriouſly conſidering the whole of this affair, I ſhall aſſign four reaſons, upon which the miſery of old age ſeems to be founded.

In the *firſt place*, 'tis ſaid, that it diſables us from buſineſs. *Secondly*, That it renders our bodies infirm,

infirm, and feeble. *Thirdly*, That it deprives us in a great meaſure of the enjoyment of all pleaſures, and, *Fourthly*, That it places us upon the confines of death.

If you pleaſe therefore, let us ſee what ſtrength there is in each of theſe objections.

As to the firſt, may it not be worth our while to enquire, of what mighty conſequence that buſineſs is, which old age renders Us incapable of managing? And is there no buſineſs then, which we may be intitled to the diſpatch of, without the ſtrength and vigour of youth? Though our bodies grow feeble and infirm, muſt the faculties of our minds be equally ſubject to decay? And what ſhall we then judge of thoſe worthy, though aged, patriots, who have gone before us, to whoſe wiſdom and authority, the preſervation and welfare of their country has been ſo often owing? To conclude therefore, that old age incapacitates us for the management of publick affairs, would be as abſurd, as to argue that a pilot is an uſeleſs, idle, and inſignificant fellow, becauſe he ſits ſtill at the management of his helm, and is not concern'd in the noiſe, hurry, and confuſion, which the reſt of the crew are engaged in, when their ſhip ſprings a leak, or is toſſed by the violence of a ſtorm.

Let old age then be excluded from the exerciſe of ſuch actions, as better ſuit with the ſtrength and vigour of youth, but not from thoſe of a more excellent, and exalted nature. For Affairs of the greateſt conſequence do not always depend upon the Agility or Activity of the Body, for the better diſpatch of them: but upon Experience, upon Authority, and good Advice, which we are

ſo

ſo far from being depriv'd of, that they encreaſe with our years. Except indeed you will object to me, that, I, who have run through all the different ſtages of a military life, am now become wholly uſeleſs: but is not my advice as ſucceſsful in the ſenate, as my arms have been in the field; and am I not now as uſeful to my country at home, as when I bore arms in perſon for the defence of it abroad?

What ſhall we ſay, *Scipio*, of your illuſtrious grandfather, whoſe honourable memory will deſcend to moſt diſtant ages? Had he ſeen above an hundred years, would he have thought one of them too many? And yet he never diſtinguiſh'd himſelf, by any ſurprizing excurſion upon the enemy, or wonderful activity, by throwing a Spear to the beſt advantage, or remarkable conduct in a cloſe engagement: but for ſtrength of reaſon and of judgment; of which were old age deſtitute, the great Council had not from thence been called the *Senate*.

Among the *Lacedemonians*, thoſe, who had the chief adminiſtration of the publick affairs, were called, as they really were, *Old Men*. And indeed if we conſult the hiſtory of the riſe and fall of foreign States and Kingdoms, we may find that they have failed and tottered thro' the raſhneſs of young directors, and been ſupported and reſtor'd by the ſteadineſs and wiſdom of more advanced years.

But here it may be objected, that in old age our *memory* is apt to fail us. This I believe indeed may be true; but then the reaſon is, either becauſe men are naturally of a very bad memory, or becauſe they neglect to improve it. *Themiſtocles*

miſtocles knew all the *Athenians* by their ſeveral names. And I my ſelf not only ſtill remember the names of all my acquaintance, who are now living, but even thoſe of their fathers and grandfathers. Nor did I ſcarcely ever hear of any one, whoſe memory has been ſo far decayed, as to forget in what particular place he had hid a treaſure, or who were his creditors or debtors. From whence 'tis plain they can remember what ſuits with their intereſt or inclinations.

Nay further, even quickneſs and a lively genius may be preſerv'd in old age, by conſtant exerciſe and induſtry. Did not *Sophocles* write Tragedies when advanced to the fulleſt years? When cited before the judges by his own children for neglecting his eſtate, through his conſtant purſuit of his ſtudies (which they would have imputed to his incapacity of managing it by reaſon of his age) was he not with univerſal applauſe acquitted, when reading a part of his laſt Tragedy to them, he deſired their opinion whether there was any thing of dotage in it?

What ſhall we ſay of *Homer*, *Heſiod*, *Pythagoras*, and *Plato*? Were they oblig'd to lay aſide their Studies by reaſon of their years, or did they not then purſue them with the ſame ardour they did before?

There are indeed two objections, which a certain author lays a great ſtreſs upon. The firſt of which is, that perſons in years are neceſſarily expoſed to the ſight of many unwelcome objects. But have not they the advantage of an equal number to entertain them; or if it were otherwiſe, is youth wholly exempt from the misfortune, and do they never meet with mortifying ſights?

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The *ſecond* is a much more melancholy conſideration, if true; which is, *that younger people generally avoid our converſation, as too troubleſome and impertinent.* But I hope it will appear, that our company is rather eligible and entertaining, than to be ſhunn'd and avoided. For as the converſation of hopeful, and ingenious youths, is very acceptable to old men, ſo will they receive an equal ſatisfaction from thoſe, to be inſtructed in the paths, which lead to honour and virtue. Nor do I take my ſelf to be leſs acceptable to you, than you can be to me; nor am I any more ſolicitous now, for your ſtrength and conſtitution, than I was at your years uneaſy, that I had not the ſtrength of an Horſe or an Elephant; which is another objection, which requires our Conſideration.

What ſtrength and vigour, we have ſtill remaining, ought to be preſerv'd, by making the beſt uſe of them we are able. But what could be more contemptible, than the childiſh lamentations of the famous *Crotonian Milo*, when by reaſon of his Age, being only a ſpectator of the Athletick Exerciſes, and looking on his once luſty Limbs, he cryed out, *Are you then come to this?* Unthinking wretch! As if his limbs were more in fault, than himſelf. For he had never acquired the leaſt fame or reputation, but by the more than ordinary ſtrength of his Conſtitution. From *Craſſus*, *Silius*, &c. we here no ſuch unmanly complaints, who were conſtantly employ'd in preſcribing Laws for the ſervice of their Country, and whoſe wiſdom and prudence grew more eminent, as they grew in years.

At the Bar indeed we muſt yield, and give up

the Cauſe, not only Invention being then required, but Strength of Lungs. But there is ſomething however ſprightly in our Voice, which has its Beauties, and which I my ſelf have not entirely loſt, though what Years I bear, you are well acquainted with. And though our Voices ſhould ſometimes fail us, yet may we ſtill inſtruct others; nor will any one, I hope, deny us the Priviledge of being fully qualified, to prepare and train up Youth, to ſerve their Country in the higheſt Stations, than which, what can be more uſeful or delightful? How extreamly happy did I always eſteem the *Scipios*, and others, ſurrounded by a noble Train of young Pupils? Nor can thoſe, who are capable of inſtructing others, in the Study of Arts and Sciences, be looked upon, but as greatly happy, however their bodily Strength may fail them; though that is oftener owing to the Fault of Youth, than to the Infirmities of Old Age; for Intemperance and Wantonneſs in the one, will not fail to render the other weak and decrepit. *Cyrus* in *Zenophon* declares in his dying Speech, He did not perceive his Conſtitution any more impair'd, in his great Increaſe of Years, than in his Bloom of Youth.

There is no neceſſity indeed, to mention any thing in my own Commendations; though that may be indulg'd me, as one of the Priviledges of my Years: For ſee how often *Homer* introduces *Neſtor*, ſpeaking amply in his own Praiſes; nor was he, who had liv'd three Ages over, at all afraid of being cenſured for Impertinence or Oſtentation, while he was conſcious, he never deviated from the Truth: For from his Mouth flow'd Eloquence more ſweet than Hony, as

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Homer tells us, to make which agreeable and charming, he had no need of the Strength and Vigour of younger Years: And we never find *Agamemnon* wiſhing for ten ſuch luſty Heroes, as *Ajax* was; but for ſo many *Neſtors*, with whom had it been his good Fortune to be attended, he had not doubted, but *Troy* would ſoon have been levelled with the ground.

But once more to make my ſelf the Subject; I now am in my eighty eighth Year, and I ſhould be glad indeed, If I could ſay that for my ſelf, which *Cyrus* ſays of himſelf above: But this however I can ſay, that though I am not now ſo hale and luſty, as when in the *Punick* War I bore Arms, or when I was Queſtor, or went Ambaſſadour to *Spain*, yet, as you ſee, my Vigour is not quite exhauſted, nor do I yet bend beneath the weight of Years. The Senate cannot complain of my being yet an uſeleſs Member of it, nor my Friends, Allies, and Dependants of my Incapacity to ſerve them; nor do I approve of that common Proverb, which adviſes us *to grow old gradually*, if we *have a mind to continue long* ſo; for I had much rather continue leſs time old, than to be ſo before I really am. Therefore no one ever made Application to me, to whom I excus'd my ſelf, on the account of Buſineſs.

I am not, 'tis true, as hale and ſtrong as either of You two; but are not ſome among the Guards ſuperiour to either of you, in Bulk and Strength? And are they therefore preferable to you? he, who has a moderate Share of Strength, has enough; provided he exerts it according to his Capacity. *Milo* was ſaid to have carried a live

Ox upon his Shoulders, a conſiderable way, at the *Olympick* Games: But yet wou'd not you prefer the Vigour of *Pythagoras*'s Mind, to *Milo*'s Strength of Body? The Faculties of our Bodies are to be made uſe of, while we poſſeſs them, but not to be lamented, when they have left us; unleſs you would think it reaſonable, that Boys ſhould be deſirous to become Children, and that thoſe, who are become Men, ſhould be wiſhing to grow Boys again.

Every Age has ſomething in it, peculiar to it ſelf: as Weakneſs to our Infancy, an unguided Warmth to Youth, Seriouſneſs to Manhood, and a certain Maturity of Judgment to Old Age, which we may expect to reap the Fruits of, when advanced to it. I ſuppoſe, You *Scipio*, hear of the preſent Conduct of *Maſſiniſſa*, an intimate Friend of your Anceſtors, and now in the ninetieth Year of his Age: if he undertakes a Journey on Foot, he will not accept the Offer of a Horſe: if he mounts his Horſe, he will not alight: nor Rain, nor Cold, can oblige him to go otherwiſe, than bareheaded: that he has an excellent Temper of Body, and therefore equal to the Performance of any princely Office. You ſee then, how by Exerciſe and Temperance we may retain, even in Old Age, ſome of the Life and Vigour of our former Years. But if we were deprived of all bodily Strength, yet is there none required of us, we being exempt, by all Laws, from ſuch Duties, as require any: ſo that we are, not only not obliged to do more than we are able, but are even excuſed from exerting our ſelves, as far as we are able.

Perhaps You may urge, that though theſe particu-

ticular Inſtances be allowed, yet the Circumſtances of many others are widely different, who are ſo feeble and infirm, as to be paſt even all the common Offices of Life; but this is a Misfortune, which not only Old Age, but alſo Sickneſs frequently occaſions. And what wonder is it, that old Men ſhould be ſometimes out of order, and ſubject to ſuch Infirmities, as the youngeſt cannot pretend any Exemption from? We muſt indeed, my Friends, uſe our beſt Skill and Induſtry, to provide againſt the Inconveniencies of Old Age, and fight as much againſt them, as any Diſtemper, which we find growing upon us, at another Seaſon of our Lives.

We ought to take due care of our Health, and to eat and drink ſparingly, and uſe moderate Exerciſe, that we may be enlivened, and have freſher Spirits, not be oppreſſed, and overloaded. But we muſt not be ſolicitous for the Faculties of the Body only, but under a far greater Concern for the Regularity of our Minds, and the even Temper of our Souls: For the Faculties of the Mind will decay, if they be not quite extinguiſhed, by length of Years, unleſs they be managed like a Lamp, which muſt often have a freſh Supply of Oil to feed it. As for the Powers of the Body, they are indeed uſually tired and wearied by Labour and continual Exerciſe, but thoſe of the Mind become the more refreſh'd and invigorated the more they are uſed.

As for thoſe old Men, who are ſo commonly repreſented, in our Comedies, as proper Subjects for Ridicule, they are only ſuch, as are too credulous, forgetful, and debauched, which are *not properly the Vices of Age*, but ſuch as are owing

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to Ignorance, or a ſleepy thoughtleſs Indulgence. Thus there are ſome Follies and Vices, which though they may be ſaid more properly to belong to Youth, than Old Age, yet is it not neceſſary, that all who are young ſhould be tainted with them, but only thoſe of more vicious Inclinations; ſo that which is in us called Dotage, though it may happen to the moſt trifling part of us, yet by no means can it be aſcribed to all.

Appius, though old and blind, was Maſter of a numerous Family, he had four Sons and five Daughters, whom he happily governed, with their Dependants, in that Condition. His Mind, like a well-ſtrung Bow, was always bent, and never gave, as forced from it's natural Temper. He ever preſerv'd *the Authority of a Father, and the Dignity of a Maſter*. His Servants feared him, his Children revered him, and thoſe who were free from their Obligations loved and eſteemed him, ſo that his Family was an excellent Pattern of *Roman* Diſcipline and Education.

So far may Old Age be eſteem'd honourable, as long as it is capable of defending it ſelf, and its own Rights and Priviledges, and can preſerve a due Authority to the laſt moments of Life. And as I muſt approve of that Youth, which has ſomething of the Conduct of Age; ſo muſt I of that Age, which retains ſomething of the Vivacity of Youth: and he who does ſo, will never be old in the Faculties of his Mind, whatever he may be in thoſe of his Body. I ſtill conſtantly employ my ſelf in the ſearch of Antiquity, in the Laws of my Country, and all other parts of uſeful Learning; nor do I fail, after the Cuſtom of the *Pythagoreans*, to improve my Memory, by re-

recollecting every Night, how I have ſpent the preceeding Day. Theſe are the Exerciſes, theſe the conſtant Employments of my Thoughts, for which, whatever Labour I am at, I ſtand in little need of better Strength and Vigour. I am always ready to aſſiſt my Friends, I frequently attend the Senate, and go prepared with ſuch Arguments, as I can manage without the Aſſiſtance of a ſtronger Conſtitution. Let it happen, that I am confined to my Chamber, when ſuch Affairs are in Agitation; I act my part over in that narrow Scene, and find Employment for my Thoughts, when I cannot appear in publick. He that ſpends his Life in this manner, cannot perceive *how Age ſteals upon him*, but as that comes on imperceptibly by Degrees, ſo he droops, not all at once, but after the ſame manner, that he arrived at Maturity.

The *third* Accuſation againſt Old Age is, that *it deprives us of the Enjoyments of Pleaſure.*

O glorious Priviledge of Age, if through thy means we can get rid of the moſt pernicious Bane, to which our Youth is liable! Give me leave to repeat to you, what a great Oratour has ſaid upon this Subject.

"Nature has not implanted in Man any more "execrable Curſe, than that of bodily Pleaſures; "to the gratification of which we are hurried "on, with ſuch unbounded and licentious Appe-"tites. For to what elſe is owing the Subver-"ſion of ſo many States and Kingdoms? What "Villainy too daring, what Undertaking too "hazardous, which the Deſire of ſatisfying our "unbounded Luſts will not inſtigate us to at-"tempt? To what are Rapes, Adulteries, or

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" ſuch like abominable Enormities owing, but " to the Gratification of our Appetites? And " ſince the Faculties of Reaſon, and Judgment, " are the moſt excellent Qualities, which Nature, " or Providence, has conferred upon us; it is " certain that nothing can be more deſtructive, " more pernicious to this *divine Gift*, than the " Indulging bodily Pleaſures? For it is impoſſible " to obſerve any Degrees of Temperance, while " we are under the Dominion of our unruly Paſ- " ſions, nor can Virtue conſiſt with the purſuit " of ſuch Enjoyments.

" And that we might have a better notion of " it, he argued, that if we conſidered, that when " we are affected with the moſt exquiſite De- " grees of Pleaſure, our Bodies are capable of, " the Operations of our rational Faculties can no " way exert themſelves, we muſt conclude, that " nothing can be a fitter Object of our Abhor- " rence and Deteſtation, than the Enjoyment of " ſuch Pleaſures: and farther, that the longer " we are in the Fruition of them, the more dull, " and heavy, do they render all our intellectual " Powers.

I have inſiſted the longer upon this, to ſhew you, if our common Prudence and Diſcretion is not ſufficient to extricate us out of ſuch enſnaring Temptations, what mighty Thanks are due to Age, in being able alone to free us from Inclinations to ſuch Pleaſures, as it is never lawful for us to indulge our ſelves in.

Once was I forced upon an ungrateful Office, namely to expel a Perſon the Senate, ſeven Years after he had been a Conſul. But he had been guilty of ſuch a piece of Extravagance, as I judged

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ought not to paſs by unmeaſured. For at the Requeſt of an infamous lewd Woman, pleaſed with Cruelty, he executed one of the poor condemned Criminals (a barbarous Diverſion!) at a publick Entertainment; and, by his ungovernable Luſt, was hurried on to do that, which was not only a Diſcredit to himſelf, but a Reproach to the State.

I have dwelt the longer on this Topick of *bodily Pleaſures*, to ſhew, it is ſo far from being a Diſparagement to our Age, to be deprived of theſe Enjoyments, that it is its greateſt Praiſe and Commendation, that it even takes off our Inclinations from the violent Purſuit of them. Though we may not indulge our ſelves ſo freely in our Cups, though we do not reliſh the Pleaſures of the moſt luxurious Proviſions, will not our being freed from the fatal Conſequences of Indigeſtion, and a diſordered Imagination, make us ample amends? But if we muſt make ſome Allowances for Pleaſure, and ſubmit to its Blandiſhments (which *Plato* calls *the Bait of humane Miſeries, with which like Fiſhes we are tempted to the Hook*) Though we are deprived of the Pleaſure of immoderate Feaſting, yet can we ſtill reliſh the Charms of an agreeable and chearful Entertainment; which ariſes not from the Delicacy or Variety of Courſes, but from the Converſation of the Company. And here I cannot help cenſuring the groſs Ideas of the *Grecians* upon this Subject, who call a Meeting, upon ſuch an Occaſion, by the bare Name of eating and drinking together, as if the Pleaſure of their Entertainment never roſe higher than their Palates.

I muſt confeſs, I ſtill take much Delight in frequent Recreations of this Nature, for the Satisfaction of converſing not only with thoſe of my own Age, of which but few remain, but even with thoſe of yours: and I muſt acknowledge my ſelf indebted to my Years for this great Benefit, that though they have impaired and diminiſhed my Appetite, they have yet improv'd my Deſire of Converſation. But ſince there are many of my Age, whoſe Palate may retain ſome Reliſh, I would not wholly exclude them from the Pleaſures of it; becauſe I would not ſeem to be a ſworn Enemy to all Pleaſure, a moderate ſhare of which Nature, no doubt, intended to indulge us in. I can with Satisfaction ſtill reliſh the cuſtomary Ceremonies of an Entertainment, Diſcourſe on ſuch Subjects, as the Maſter of the Feaſt ſhall direct, and drink a moderate chearful Glaſs. Thus I ſpend my Time at my Country Seat, where my Table is daily ſet round with my Neighbours; and we ſit up as late at night, as our Converſation makes it agreeable.

If we have not ſo exquiſite a Taſte of other ſenſual Pleaſures, we have no Reaſon to lament their Abſence, when our Inclinations towards them become leſs impetuous: for thoſe, who have once had a full Enjoyment of them, will find more Pleaſure in abſtaining from, than in the Fruition of them. He cannot properly be ſaid to be deprived of what he does not deſire the Enjoyment of, which makes me affirm, that there is *more Satisfaction in not deſiring, than in indulging our Deſires.*

And what a glorious Privilege is it, to be delivered from the Dominion of all our intemperate

rate and unruly Paſſions? For a Man to be qualified to be good Company (if the Expreſſion may be allowed) *for himſelf when alone*, and to need no other Comfort, than what his own Thoughts and Studies can ſupply him with? And if in our younger Years, we lay up any Store of good Learning, to feed and ſupport our more advanced Age, what can be more delightful, than to employ it in the farther Purſuit of knowledge? Have we not ſeen *Gallus*, a particular Acquaintance of your Fathers, *Scipio*, ſo taken up with meaſuring the Diſtance of heavenly Bodies, and the ſeveral Regions of this lower World, that, to outward Appearance, he ſeem'd no longer a living Inhabitant of it? How often has he begun his Studies with the Riſing of the Sun, and found it ſet before he was aware? How frequently has he done the ſame in the Evening, and been ſurprized by the unexpected Dawn of the Morning? With what extraordinary Joy would he likewiſe foretel to us an Eclipſe of the Sun, or Moon, ſeveral Months before they happened?

How many others might I mention, who have ſpent their Time in more diverting Studies, with inconceivable Delight and Satisfaction? What bright, lively, and brisk *old Poets* have we ſeen, who laboured many Years, either to pleaſe us with the Intrigues of a Comedy, or to inſtruct us, from the Fates of others, in Tragical Repreſentations? Are Feaſts, and Balls, are the moſt voluptuous Exceſſes of Intemperate Youth, capable of affecting us with any Degrees of Pleaſure, comparable to thoſe, that are the Product of Learning? which all wiſe Men will endeavour

to improve, and cultivate, to their laſt Moments, and which will create the greateſt Pleaſure our Souls are capable of.

I come now to the Pleaſures of *a Country Life*, in which I always find a wonderful Satisfaction; a Satisfaction no way loſt to Old Age, and little ſhort of that, which ariſes from the nobleſt Exerciſes of the Mind. For what can be more rational, and agreeable, than to cultivate that Earth, which never refuſes any kind of Tillage, and will repay with abundant Intereſt, whatever ſhe receives? Not that the Fruit of it is the only thing to be admired; but what affects me with the greateſt Pleaſure, is the conſideration of its natural Fruitfulneſs: that when it has been manured, plowed up, and harrowed, it ſhould receive the ſcattered Grain into its Boſom, and there cheriſhing, and invigorating it with its genial Warmth, ſhould gently rear it green, and flouriſhing: that thus receiving Nouriſhment through its tender Fibres, it inſenſibly grows upwards, till ſupported by its jointed Stalk, it ſhoots forth in the Blade, then diffuſes its nouriſhing Seed into an uniform Ear, which Nature has fortified, as it were with ſo many ſmall Spears, to prevent its being devoured by leſſer Birds, to whoſe pecking it would otherwiſe be expoſed.

What ſhall I ſay of the Planting, the Growth, and Product of the Vine? I can never be cloyed with the purſuit of this Narrative, of what yields ſo much repoſe to my elder Years; to omit the plaſtick Virtue of all things produced from the Earth, How wonderful is it, that from ſo ſmall a Grain, as that of a Fig, the Stone of a Grape, or

or the minnteſt Seeds of other Fruits and Plants, ſhould proceed Boughs, and Trunks, of ſo immenſe a Size? With what Admiration are we ſtruck, when we view the ſeveral different Ways of raiſing them, and how the various Methods anſwer the ſame Deſign? when we obſerve how the Vine, naturally prone to the Earth, and too feeble to raiſe its Branches, ſeeks ſome neighbouring Support, and aſpires by embracing and claſping it about with its Tendrels? How it would become wild and unfruitful, by running into unneceſſary and unfruitful Branches, unleſs kept within Bounds, by a ſeaſonable and artful Pruning? To ſee, in the firſt Approach of Spring, the Bud firſt appearing from the knotted Shoots, from whence the Grape breaks forth, which being cheriſhed by the Moiſture of the Earth, and the Heat of the Sun, at firſt though rough, and ſour to the Palate, ſweetens as it ripens, and being cloathed, as it were, with broad ſpreading Leaves receives due Warmth, and is defended from the too exceſſive Hears? and what Fruit does Nature produce, either ſo plentiful and enlivening, or which can entertain our Eyes with ſo delightful a Sight?

But theſe are not the only Diverſions of a Country Life, nor are they confined alone to the Tillage of Land, to Meadows, Paſtures, Vineyards, and Plantations; but we have Gardens, Orchards, the Care of Bees, and of Cattle, and the beautiful Variety of different Flowers, to entertain our ſelves with. Nor does the Art of Grafting, and Inoculating, delight me leſs than that of Planting, it being in my Opinion the moſt curious Invention in the whole Compaſs of Agriculture.

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I cou'd for ever deſcant upon the Enjoyment, which a Country Life affords me, but that, I fear, I have already tired your Patience with my Relation of them: however you muſt make Allowance for my Years, if I ſhould talk too much, Loquacity being one of thoſe Infirmities (for ſome muſt be allowed) from which I would not pretend to exempt Old Age.

I muſt therefore once more affirm, that nothing can afford more true Content and Satisfaction, than *Agriculture*, which is of ſuch univerſal Benefit and Delight to all Mankind, in its large Supplies of Plenty and Abundance. For every provident and careful Houſe-keeper will not fail of ſtoring his Cellars with the beſt Wines, and his Farm with Plenty of all Proviſions, to which the Diverſion of our leiſure Hours, Hawking, or Hunting, will not fail of giving a due Reliſh.

In ſhort, what can be more beautiful than the Greenneſs of the Meadows, than the Rows of Trees, or Vines, planted at equal Diſtance from each other? And the Comforts of a Country Life are ſo far from being improper to our Age, that nothing can be more ſuitable to it. For where can we better enjoy the Sun's Heat, or cool Shades than here? Where can we have freſher Air in a ſcorching Seaſon, or be ſo well furniſhed with Fewel, to guard againſt the Severities of the Winter?

Let thoſe of younger Years take to themſelves all the Diverſions their ſeveral ſorts of Gaming, Fencing, Racing, or Bathing can afford them: leave us to our Cheſſe-boards, and our Tables; and yet we are not ſolicitous even for thoſe, ſince

ſince the Happineſs of old Age does not depend upon them.

Zenophon has an excellent Treatiſe upon this Subject, and well worthy your careful and frequent Peruſal, wherein he introduces *Socrates* telling a Story of *Cyrus*, King of *Perſia*, (who was as eminent for the Endowments of his Mind, as for the Glories of a mighty Empire) to whom *Lyſander*, a Man of no ſmall Fame and Reputation, was ſent upon an Embaſſy from *Lacedemon*; whom when he had treated with the greateſt Teſtimonies of Civility and good Breeding, he carried into his Garden, the beauteous Form of which *Lyſander* ſurveying with much Aſtoniſhment and Pleaſure, could not forbear extolling the extraordinary Genius, as well as Induſtry of the Perſon, who had laid it out in ſuch exact and curious Order : and hearing *Cyrus* own the whole Crntrivance of it, and that he planted many of the Trees with his own Hand, fixing his Eyes upon his Majeſtick Perſon, and rich *Perſian* Robes, he cryed out, *moſt juſtly does the World eſteem you happy, who have not only the Bleſſings of Fortune, but enjoy the greater Perfections of the Mind.*

Such is the happineſs, and ſuch the Comforts, which Old Age may partake of, and enjoy till its laſt Minutes. Did not *Valerius Corvus*, when a hundred Years old, betake himſelf to theſe Pleaſures of a *Country* Life, after he had been advanced to the greateſt Honours of the State, at very diſtant Times ? And was he not happier in his latter Days, than in his Vigour, when in thoſe he had fewer Fatigues, and commanded more Reverence and Eſteem ; eſpecially, when

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Authority is the higheſt of our Ambition, in ſuch Circumſtances.

But whatever I have ſaid, or may farther offer, in Commendation of *Old Age*, I would always be underſtood of ſuch an Age, as preſuppoſes a regular and virtuous Youth. In this, though gray Hairs and Wrinkles may be Arguments of Weakneſs, and a Decay of Conſtitution, yet Men are uſed to pay a kind of Homage to the Remains of a well-ſpent Life, and to make their Addreſſes with Awe, and Veneration: for it is not in the Power of gray Hairs, or Wrinkles, of themſelves alone, to procure for us ſuch Degrees of Honour.

We have ſome common Ceremonies of Civility paid to us by the Younger, which perhaps may ſeem but trifling; ſuch as being uncovered in our Preſence, giving us the firſt Place, applying to us for Advice on all Emergencies, and the like: and yet theſe are all real Marks of Honour, and ſuch as all well-governed Societies will always retain. *Lyſander*, whom I lately mentioned, uſed to ſay, that *Lacedemon* was the moſt honourable Retreat of Old Age, to which no other Country ever paid ſuch Honours; and that the *Lacedemonian* Ambaſſadors once at *Athens*, ſeeing a venerable Old Man coming into the full Theatre, and no one of his Fellow-Citizens offering him a place to ſit in, they all, who ſat in a place appointed for them, roſe up, nor would again be ſeated, till they paid ſuch Civility, as they thought due to his Age, and made him ſit down among them.

This civil Treatment met with ſuch univerſal Applauſe, that one of them made his Reflection

flection upon it, that the *Athenians* were well enough acquainted with the Knowledge of their Duty, but backward in the Practice of it.

Rome affords us ſeveral Inſtances of the like Regard, when in the Debates, though Perſons of greater Dignity, and honour'd with publick Employments, are preſent, none preſumes to ſpeak, till the moſt Aged has given his Opinion. Theſe are the great Comforts of our Age, nor in my Opinion at all inferiour to any of thoſe, which Youth is poſſeſſed of. Thus we go off the Stage like Players, who have long practiſed in the Theatre, with the ſame Applauſe for the Performance of the laſt Act, as of any other.

But may it not be ſaid, that Men, when they come to our Years, are naturally *moroſe, fretful, and ill-natured*; *and too often covetous*? I anſwer, that theſe Vices are not to be imputed to our Years, but to our Conduct, and Manner of Life. And as to our being *peeviſh*, though this be not altogether juſtifiable, yet it may be partly excuſed in us, becauſe we may be apt to think our ſelves ſlighted, and deſpiſed, by Reaſon of our natural Infirmities; and moreover, being but of a crazy Conſtitution, any the leaſt Rub, and Difficulty muſt needs be very troubleſome to us. But even this *peeviſh Temper* may be prevented, or corrected, by the conſtant Study and Practice of Morality. For by this means ſome Men, when they come to be in Years, are as different from others, of the ſame Age with them, as *Terence*'s two Brothers were, one of which was as affable and good natured, as the other was croſs and churliſh. In ſhort, as it fares with Wines, ſo it does with Old Men: all are not

equally apt to grow ſour with Age. A ſerious and moderately grave Deportment well becomes us, but nothing of an *auſtere Severity*.

As for Covetouſneſs, and an eager Deſire to heap up Riches in this World, when we are about to leave it, I muſt own, I know not what to make of it. For what in Nature can be more abſurd, than to be anxiouſly intent in making Proviſions for our Journey, when we are almoſt at the End of it?

The *fourth*, and laſt Objection is, *That our Age cannot but be unhappy under the continual Apprehenſions of the Approach of Death*, which, however ſet at a Diſtance by miſtaken Youth, muſt be daily fear'd by thoſe who are in Years.

And O Unhappy Age indeed, if after ſo long a Courſe of Years we have not yet found, that Death ought always to be contemned! which ought to be deſpiſed, if our Soul be extinguiſhed by it; or greatly to be wiſhed for, if it thereby becomes eternal. And it is impoſſible, but that it muſt do the one, or the other: and what *then have I to fear, if I ſhall either not be unhappy; or poſſeſſed of a Happineſs, endleſs and immutable*?

But beſides, who is there, though never ſo *young*, that can be aſſured he ſhall not die before he goes to bed? Nay is not Youth ſubject to many more fatal Accidents, than we are? Are they not expoſed to many more Diſeaſes? Are not their Sickneſſes much more violent; and is not the cure wrought with much more Difficulty, and ſeverer Uſage of the Patient? Hence it is, that we find ſo few that live to our Age, and arrive to our Years, which indeed is one great Reaſon, that the World does not grow wiſer and better.

ter. For *Wiſdom*, *Reaſon*, and *Counſel* are allowed to belong more peculiarly to Men of Years, without whom Government and Civil Societies could not be founded, or ſubſiſt.

But to return to the *near Approach of Death*. How comes that to be objected to Old Age, which is common to Youth? That Death is common to every Age, I have been ſufficiently made ſenſible, by the Death not only of my excellent and well-beloved Son, but alſo of many other very promiſing young Gentlemen; ſuch, *Scipio*, as were two Brothers of yours.

But Youth, you'll ſay perhaps, may live in Hopes of Length of Days, when we are deprived even of *all Hope*. A childiſh Hope this indeed! To hold Uncertainties for Certainties, and Falſity for Truth! Old Age, you ſay, has not even Hope for its Relief; but, even in that Reſpect, is it not far preferable to Youth, in being actually poſſeſſed of what the other only hopes for? Long Life is ſure on the one ſide, and only wiſhed for on the other.

But after all, *What is there, O ye Gods! in this ſhort ſpace of Life, that can be thought of any long Continuance, if it has any End*? For when the End is come, then all that is paſt is loſt; nor can any thing ſurvive it, but the Memory of our Virtuous Actions. Hours, and Days, and Months, and Years paſs by us, and what is gone can never return, nor can we apprehend what is to follow it.

A ſhort Space of time is long enough, if conſtantly employed in the Purſuit of Honour and Virtue; and if it is extended to a longer Term of Years, we ought no more to repine and mur-

mur at the Alterations that happen in it, than the Husband-men lament the Approach of Summer, or of Autumn, when they have paſſed by all the Pleaſures of a delightful Spring. For the Spring may repreſent to us our Youthful Days, and give us a Proſpect of our growing Fruits, which the following Seaſons ripen, and make fit to be gathered. Now the Fruit of our Old Age is, as I have frequently obſerved, the Memory and Abundance of our Virtuous Actions.

All things, which happen regularly in the Courſe of Nature, are to be eſteemed as good; and what can happen more ſo, than that Old Men ſhould die, when even Young Men, we ſee, are ſubject to Death, which as to them is not ſo natural. For this Reaſon, I think it not improper, to compare the Death of Youth to Flames extinguiſhed, by a violent and ſuddain Splaſh of Water; and that of Riper Years, to ſuch a Fire, as without any Violence, goes out, when all its Fewel is decayed and ſpent. And as Fruit, when it is green, is torn and plucked with Violence from the Boughs, which, when become more ripe and mellow, falls gently of it ſelf: So Youth departs this Life with violent Strugles, while Old Age drops off mature with Years. And indeed the Proſpect of this is ſo far from being unpleaſant, that the nearer it is, the more delightful does it ſeem: nor is it leſs grateful, than the Sight of land can be to one, quite tired with a long and tedious Voyage.

A certain Period is determined to every Stage of Life, except Old Age; which we cannot ſpend amiſs, as long as we are capable of performing the neceſſary Duties of it, and live in a con-

tempt of Death, which makes our Age frequently more reſolute and courageous, than that of Youth. Hence *Solon*'s Anſwer to *Piſiſtratus* the *Tyrant*, when being demanded *on what Preſumption he dared diſobey his Will*; replyed, *on no other than his Years.*

But the beſt Period of our Lives is that, when the ſame Being, which framed and faſhioned us, ſhall think fit to diſſolve us, while poſſeſſed of a vigorous Mind, and all the Faculties of Senſe: I ſay the ſame Being, that framed us; for as a Ship, or Houſe, is beſt taken to pieces by the ſame Perſons that built them, ſo is the ſame Nature, which contrived and work'd us up, beſt qualified to pull down the Structure of our Bodies. And whereas every new Building is more compact, and more cloſely cemented, that which has ſtood the Shock of Time more apt to moulder and decay; hence we learn, neither to be too anxious for the ſmall Remains of Life, nor too careleſs in the Preſervation of it.

Pythagoras, comparing our mortal to a military Condition, forbids us to quit the Poſt and Station, aſſign'd us by our Superiours; intimating thereby, that our Lives ought to be diſpoſed of, as God, who gave them, thinks fit; and not according to our own Humour and Fancy. It is recorded in *Solon*'s Praiſe, that he was deſirous to have his Deceaſe lamented by his Friends, as a Teſtimony of their Love and Affection for him. He had a Mind, I believe, to have the neareſt Place in their Eſteem; but perhaps *Ennius* had better Sentiments, when he expreſſed himſelf in the following manner:

No Sighs my Death; no Tears my Fate attend:
For Death gives Life, a Life that cannot end.

He had no Opinion of lamenting over the Dead, being perſwaded, *That Death was followed by a State of Immortality*. The Pangs of Death we may indeed be ſenſible of, but the greater Load of Years, we labour under, the leſs ſenſible ſhall we be of them: And after our Deceaſe, we ſhall either not be ſenſible of any thing at all; or if we be, what *we* are ſenſible of, will be extreamly delightful to us.

But this ought to be the conſtant Meditation of our younger Years, that ſo we may be able to think of Death, without fearing it; without which, it is impoſſible to enjoy our ſelves, in any true Content and Happineſs. *For die we muſt, nor can we tell how ſoon.* He then, who is under the continual Apprehenſions of it, can never be without a melancholy Concern and Uneaſineſs.

Nor is there any Need to inſiſt longer on the Proof of this, if we reflect, not only how many noble Patriots have voluntarily ſacrificed themſelves for the Service of their Country, but how many Legions have ruſhed boldly on ſuch Attacks, from which they had no Hopes of returning. Shall then Old Men, and well experienced in the Paths of Virtue and Learning, dread that, which others, without any ſuch Advantages, deſpiſe and laugh at?

There are, in every Stage of Life, peculiar Pleaſures and Diverſions, in the Purſuit of which we are employed. And as, when Boys, we are tired with ſuch things, as pleaſed our Infant State,

and

and, when advanced to a riper Age, we ſtill grow weary of our former Diverſions; ſo Old Age it ſelf has its peculiar Enjoyments. Therefore, as all the ſeveral Delights, of all our different Ages, decay and grow inſipid, thoſe of our lateſt Years will likewiſe fail, and make us loath and reject them, till at laſt, well ſatisfied with Length of Days, we fall our ſelves, as it were full ripe, and fit to drop into another World.

I ſee no Reaſon to conceal from You my real Sentiments upon this Subject, which I muſt think I have a much clearer Proſpect of, the nearer I approach it. I cannot help believing, that your illuſtrious Fathers, and my once Dear Friends, are ſtill alive, in a much more proper Senſe, than when among us, and now enjoy ſuch a State of Life, as is only worthy of being called ſo. For while we are confined in the narrow Priſons of our Bodies, we muſt ſubmit to all the laborious Tasks, which Nature has allotted us. But our *Soul is of a Celeſtial Nature*, and though it be ſent down from Heaven, to be here immerſed in Matter, yet it is evident, that it is not a proper Manſion for it, but rather repugnant to any Thing of a *Divine, Eternal Nature.*

Nor can I help believing, that the immortal Gods would have animated our Bodies with ſuch noble Faculties, but only that we might be able to ſurvey, and admire the ſurprizing Works of Nature, and by contemplating the Courſe and Order of Celeſtial Beings, might ſtrive to imitate their Conſtancy, by an equal and ſteady Courſe of Life, in the Purſuit of Virtue.

Nor is this Belief the Reſult of my own Reaſon only, but the Character and Authority of the

the beſt Philoſophers confirm me in it. *Pythagoras*, and all his Followers, did not at all doubt, but that our *Souls were Rays flowing from, and centring in that Divine Nature, which is the general Source and Fountain of Life.*

I have often likewiſe heard the Arguments, which *Socrates* (who was pronounced the wiſeſt of all Mankind by *Apollo*'s Oracle) delivered juſt before his Death, upon the Immortality of our Souls. In ſhort, I am fully convinced and perſwaded, that ſince they are of ſo quick and active a Nature, ſince our Memory of paſt things is of ſo large extent, ſince we are able to form ſuch Judgments about the Conſequences of Things, ſince ſo many Arts and Sciences have been ſo wonderfully improved, and ſince there are daily ſo many new Diſcoveries made, 'tis impoſſible, that a Nature, which can take in, and comprehend ſuch an immenſe Variety of Matter, ſhould be mortal.

And ſince our Souls are conſtantly in Action, and have no borrowed Principle of Motion, becauſe they themſelves do move themſelves; they can therefore never ceaſe to be in motion, becauſe they will never ceaſe to be what they are. Since likewiſe they are of ſo pure and ſimple a Nature, as to admit of nothing that is contrary, or repugnant to them, it is impoſſible, that they ſhould be divided, and conſequently they can never periſh.

Moreover it is plain to me, that we have *Preconceptions* of many things, even before we are born; for when in Childhood, we are put upon Learning ſeveral difficult Arts, and Sciences, we oftentimes apprehend them with ſo much Eaſe and

and Readineſs, that it looks more like a Recollection of what we knew before, than owing to new Inſtructions.

This is the ſame Opinion almoſt with *Plato's*; but let us hear how *Cyrus*, on his Death-bed, expoſtulates with his Children.

"Think not, ſays he, my dear Children, that "when I depart from you, I have no farther Ha-"bitation, or Continuance in Being: For while "I have been among you, you have never been "able to diſcern my Soul, but by its Operations "on the Body. Be ſtill perſwaded, that it will "always have a Being, though the Being of it is "not the Object of your Senſes. The Memory "of Illuſtrious Perſons could not deſcend to "ſuch diſtant Ages, after their Deceaſe, if their "Souls did not ſurvive, and were employed "in the Preſervation of their own Honour. "Moreover, I can never be induced to believe, "that our Souls, can be ſaid *to live, while clothed* "*with theſe mortal Bodies*, or be *ſaid to die*, "*when they depart from them*; or that our Souls "become then void of all Senſation, when they "leave the Body ſenſeleſs; but that when "delivered from all corporeal Mixtures, they "aſſume a pure, ſimple, and unmixed Nature, "and become capable of the moſt exalted De-"grees of Senſation. And though we can re-"ſolve all other Things, at their Diſſolutions, "into the ſame Principles to which they owe "their Riſe, we can have no clearer View of "what the Soul alone can be reduced to, than "we can form a Notion of what it was, before "we were animated with it.

"Nothing more reſembles *Death*, than *Sleep*;

" and when aſleep we can often diſcern the *Di-*
" *vinity of our Souls*; for then being more at Li-
" berty, they often *launch into Futurity*, and
" thereby ſhew us what their State will be, when
" once delivered from the Bonds of fleſh, which
" now obſtruct and clog them.

" If therefore what I have now advanced be
" true, pay *divine Honours* to me, as a more ex-
" alted Being, after I am freed from this State of
" Mortality. If it happen contrary to theſe my
" Expectations, and the Soul is in the ſame State
" of Death with the Body, yet do you however,
" continuing your Reverence to the immortal
" Gods, who preſerve and govern the beautiful
" and harmonious Frame of the Univerſe, pay a
" pious and inviolable Regard to my Memory.

Such was the Diſcourſe of *Cyrus*, to his Friends upon his Death-Bed: and now, if you pleaſe, let us take notice of the Sentiments of our own Country-men.

No one can ever make me believe, that any of your illuſtrious Anceſtors, *Scipio*, would have undertaken ſuch great and glorious Actions, ſo worthy to be deliver'd to late Poſterity, except they had thought, that they themſelves had ſome Concern in Futurity. Do you imagine that I my ſelf (indulge my Years if I ſeem too vain-glorious) do you think, I ſhould have run through the Fatigues and Labours, of ſo many Nights and Days in the Field, and in the Senate-houſe, without a Preſumption, that the Senſe of the Honour acquired by them, would laſt beyond the narrow Limits of this Life.

Were it otherwiſe, would it not have been far more agreeable to have ſpent my life in ſoft Eaſe

and

and Pleaſure, than in toilſome and eager Purſuits? But, I know not by what means, my *Soul, always ſoaring above the ſcanty Bounds of this Life, extends it ſelf to ſuch a glorious Proſpect of Futurity, as to expect an Entrance into a better State of Life, as ſoon as it quits this.* And were this State of Immortality only a Fancy, how comes it to paſs, that the moſt virtuous and generous Part of Mankind, have always a ſtronger Bent to the Deſire of endleſs Honours?

Beſides do we not ſee, that a Man, the *wiſer* he is, meets Death with the more Satisfaction; and that as the *Degrees of Folly* are greater, the Reluctancy to it is proportionable. And is it not, in this Caſe, with the Strength and Clearneſs of our Underſtandings, as it is with the Make and Conſtitution of our Eyes; ſome of which can entertain themſelves with beautiful Proſpects at a greater Diſtance, which cannot be perceived, and are altogether loſt to others.

I muſt confeſs, I have a moſt ardent Deſire of converſing with your two Fathers, whom I loved and honoured; nor is this paſſionate Deſire confin'd to the Converſation of thoſe only, with whom I was once acquainted, but even of thoſe, whom I have heard, or read, or wrote of. And when I am once upon my Journey thither, I ſhould not eaſily be prevail'd with to return; and ſhould any of the *Gods* give me the Liberty of beginning again the Circle of my Years, I ſhould deſire to be excuſed, and be unwilling to begin *the Race again, when I am juſt arrived at the Goal.*

For pray, what great Advantages of Life are we poſſeſſed of? or rather, how many Incon-

veniences attend it? At beſt, we may be wearied, or abundantly ſatisfied, with the agreeableſt Enjoyments it affords. Not that I would bewail, or lament the time I have lived, as ſome have done, nor can I repent that I have lived ſo long, becauſe I have lived ſo, as to hope, I have not fruſtrated the End of Nature, and am diſpoſed to leave this Life, *with as much Indifference, as an Inn upon the Road*; for Nature here intends us a *Lodging* only, not a *Fixed Home* or *ſettled Place of Habitation.*

O glorious Day! when I ſhall enjoy the divine Company of ſuch bleſſed Souls, and be delivered as it were, from a Croud, the greateſt part of which is made up of vile and profligate Wretches. When I ſhall not only be in the Society of thoſe great Men, I juſt now mentioned, but ſhall again converſe with my excellent Son *Cato*, whoſe funeral Solemnities I performed, though it would have been more natural for him to have performed that laſt Office for his Father. His Soul did not then forſake me, but entering into happier Manſions, looked back upon me, pleaſed with the Hopes that I ſhould ſpeedily follow him: and though I ſeemed to bear his Departure without any Appearance of *Grief* and Anxiety, it was not becauſe I was wholly unconcerned at ſuch a great Affliction, but the nearer Proſpect of ſeeing him again added extreamly to my Conſolation.

Theſe are the Supports, that enable me to bear the Burthen of my Years, which you, *Scipio* and *Lælius*, ſo often declare you admire: and by which it not only becomes not *burthenſome*, but *pleaſant.*

And if my Notion of the Soul's Immortality ſhould

ſhould prove an Error, 'tis ſuch a *charming* Deluſion, as I am reſolved to entertain and embrace, as long as I live. But if it ſhould be mortal, as ſome Philoſophers of a lower Rank would make us believe, I ſhall not when dead much fear their Cenſures for a Miſtake, which the want of Senſe will not allow me to be convinced of. And if it ſhould not prove immortal, yet is there a *proper Seaſon*, when even *Death it ſelf becomes deſireable. For Nature has ſet Limits to our Lives, as well as to all other Things, from which 'tis unreaſonable to expect an Exemption.*

Theſe are my Thoughts upon Old Age, to which I heartily wiſh you may both happily arrive, and find, what I have now ſaid, to be true, by the beſt Proof, that of your own Experience.

F I N I S.